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<t—itle> Telling Ggovernance Sstories: Ffrom Llecturer, to Minister, and Bback!

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<author>Professor Leighton Andrews, Cardiff Business School,

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<author bio> Leighton Andrews is pProfessor of Ppractice in pPublic sService lLeadership and iInnovation, Cardiff Business School. He was an elected member of the National Assembly for Wales from 2003-2016, serving as a mMinister between 2007 and 2016. In the past, he has been a public affairs practitioner, including service as the BBC's hHead of pPublic aAffairs. His most recent book is Ministering to Education (2014).

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<5-line drop cap initial text><start text>Is political science interested in the lived, day-to-day experience of elected politicians, particularly those with executive authority? In his recent book, “How to Run A Government So that Citizens Benefit and Taxpayers Don't Go Crazy,” his recent book on how to run a government, the former head of Tony Blair's Delivery Unit, Sir Michael Barber, argues:

Surprisinglysserts that “very few of the books and little of the commentary focus on how to run a government so that it delivers the change it has promised. In fact, there is a gaping hole where this should be” (Barber 2015, xi).

Barber had mademakes that the same point in some detail in his previous book, *Instruction to Deliver*, which narratesing the story of his time running the Prime Minister's Delivery Unit, and offers a possible reason. Indeed, he may have given a clue as to why this is the case: “

Stubborn persistence, relentless monotony, attention to detail and glorying in routine are vastly underestimated in the literature on government and political history” (Barber 2007, 111).

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I suppose an alternative way of putting this could be that writing about monotony and routine may not help you make the best-seller lists! After all, as Margaret Thatcher's authorised biographer and former editor of the UK's *Telegraph*, Charles Moore, ~~former editor of the UK's *Daily and Sunday Telegraph*~~, confessed on behalf of the journalistic profession, “:

\_\_\_\_\_ Barber's point seems to me a valid one;: there is a dearth of *detailed* commentary on what governments—and their political ~~(and bureaucratic)~~ leaders—do in practical ways to deliver change and monitor it (see also Wagenaar 2004). As Rhodes observes, “:

\_\_\_\_\_ The relationship of the practice of government to real-world challenges and crises is ~~of course~~ taught in schools of public administration and government, business schools, and by contemporary historians. ~~Meanwhile, think~~ Think-tanks such as the Institute for Government in the UK, or the global Centre for Public Impact, ~~are looking~~ at these questions as well. As a practitioner of politics, I was an avid reader of other people's experiences in ~~Government~~ government, drawing on autobiographies, biographies, and political history to understand how others approached the problems they faced in particular circumstances. As an academic, I find myself looking at similar sources but in a more systematic way, looking for generalizable experiences that can inform teaching and scholarship.

\_\_\_\_\_ I was fortunate as an elected politician and a ~~Minister~~ minister in the Welsh benefit from Michael Barber's counsel, both in my time as ~~m~~Minister for ~~E~~ducation -13 and later as ~~Minister~~ minister for ~~Public-public~~ Services-services from 2014–16. In weeks of my appointment as ~~e~~Education ~~m~~Minister, we ran a day-long seminar in which helped my department clarify its goals. In 2015, as ~~m~~Minister for ~~p~~Public ~~s~~Services, I held a day ‘summit’ for the top 200 public service leaders in Wales;—local government leaders and chief executives, health board chairs, board members and chief executives, police chief constables, senior fire officers, university and college leaders, and many others. At that summit, organized for me by the Welsh Government's government's leadership

development arm, Academi Wales, we heard from public service leaders with experience other countries, such as the United States and Australia, and rolled out a set of common values and behaviours for Welsh public services (Academi Wales, 2016). Michael spoke passionately, setting out the principles of what he calls “deliverology”.<sup>3</sup>

<Insert PQ 1 about here>

I spend much of my time at present thinking about the various problem of governance, ~~whether that is such as~~ the governance of a small stateless nation with a young polity such as Wales, the wider challenges of what ~~Ministers-ministers~~ actually do as departmental and system leaders, or ~~about~~ how political leadership relates to the broader question of public service leadership. I am developing postgraduate ~~teaching courses~~ in these areas. I also have a growing interest in what technological governance—and broader public administration—means in the age of Uber and the ubiquitous algorithm. This builds on my prior practitioner experience as the BBC’s ~~h~~Head of ~~Public-public Affairs-affairs~~ in London in the 1990s, ~~when I was~~ responsible for relations with Westminster and Brussels during the period of law-making on digital television (Andrews 2005).

Many of these areas are ~~actually~~ emergent. ~~Although~~—there is some strong initial work, ~~but~~ the research base ~~on devolved government and governance generally, and on UK devolution in particular, —for example on the governance and government of UK devolution —is thin. Lynch in~~ In his work on ~~First-first Ministers-ministers~~ in Scotland and Wales, Lynch (Lynch 2006) complained that there was “insufficient evidence” to analyse properly the relevance of theories of governance within ~~the~~ devolved administrations (2006). That still stands today. Michael Barber kindly wrote the foreword to my book *Ministering to Education* (Andrews 2014), which describes the educational reform agenda ~~that which~~ we pursued. At the time of writing in 2017, ~~eighteen-18~~ years after devolution to Wales, it ~~is~~ ~~remains~~ the only

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published book by a former Welsh ~~Minister~~ minister on their experience in Welsh  
\_\_\_\_\_The study of ~~Ministers~~ ministers is often focussed more on the political  
circumstances leading to the development of policies or decisions rather than on the practice  
of ~~Ministers~~ ministers or political leaders in governing or leading a system. Political  
leadership and its development is “under-theorised and under-researched” (Hartley 2010;  
146). In his autobiography, Tony Blair reflects that he had never held any ministerial office  
before becoming ~~Prime~~ prime ~~Minister~~ minister —and that he ~~got~~ came to grips with the  
Whitehall machine only over time (2010). ~~(Blair 2010)~~ As the BBC journalist James  
Naughtie ~~recorded~~ reflected: “[Blair] ~~he~~ is the only ~~Prime~~ prime ~~Minister~~ minister of the  
modern era in Britain to have had to learn the business of government after being elected to  
lead one” (Naughtie 2004, 32).

No one, of course, teaches you how to be a ~~Government~~ government ~~Minister~~ minister.  
Former Conservative Cabinet Minister Michael Heseltine assessed that:  
~~available literature on leadership development in politics is valuable and growing.~~ In general,  
ministers holding office for the first time rely on experience of prior roles, within politics  
and outside elsewhere. In my case, ~~my~~ academic training may have helped with ~~the~~ my  
framing of arguments. My interest in using speeches to flesh out the bones of policy may  
have had an academic origin: —for politicians, speeches are to policy documents what  
conference papers are to finished articles. ~~A~~ Certainly my academic training equipped me  
with the analytical tools to consider and challenge the advice ~~that was~~ given to me as a  
~~Minister~~ minister. ~~Those~~ I found the lessons of academic authorities, particularly in history  
and cultural studies, valuable throughout; they ~~who had~~ taught me to be sceptical of  
authority, of received wisdom, of determinism whether technological or social, and to go  
back to the original sources when necessary rather than relying on summaries by officials;  
~~were valuable throughout~~. However, I would not want to privilege my academic experience

**Commented [LS3]:** AU: The sentence about the literature on leadership development being valuable seems a bit stranded here in that I'm not sure it how it relates to the previous or the current paragraph. I therefore suggest here that you remove that sentence and beginning with "In General, ministers holding office..." instead.

**Commented [LA4R3]:** Agreed.

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over the shrewd political skills developed by colleagues who ~~previously had~~ held political in local councils, or worked in trades unions, or ~~had run~~ community projects. Even for ~~gained insight from~~, prior experience of working ~~around with~~ politicians ~~and~~, ~~from discussing issues with politicians who were~~ friends ~~and who~~ had served in senior political corporate environment of the BBC was particularly valuable in developing the patience and ~~“corridor politics”~~ needed to win support for policy positions amongst ministerial

Practitioners ~~can be~~ sometimes disparaging about ~~“chalk and talk”~~ courses ~~which that~~ do not engage with real-world situations. The role of a ~~p~~Professor of ~~p~~Practice is relatively new at Cardiff University, ~~which means there is and space is there~~ to ~~help~~ define that role.

Experience is conspicuously valued. I have found my own experience as a ~~m~~Minister to be of interest to a number of areas of study in the university. I am fortunate also ~~that the~~ that the university has ~~had taken a~~ practical role both in developing public policy and in testing out what works in public service innovation. ~~Cardiff University has been, through its involvement involved~~ in the creation of ~~both~~ the Welsh Government-backed Public Policy Institute for Wales, ~~and of~~ the public service laboratory Y Lab, developed in conjunction with Nesta; (PPIW 2014; Nesta 2015). ~~So~~ As a result, I have been telling ~~“governance stories”~~ (Bevir and Rhodes 2006) in a variety of departments: ~~I~~ in the business school, not only in relation to the development of courses in public administration, but more widely, in terms of business relationships to government and politics; in social sciences, particularly in providing a practitioner perspective on debates in education; and in political science, where the view from a minister’s office is seen as providing ~~an~~ unique insight, ~~with and~~ the potential to ~~help~~ analyse policy and delivery issues through a number of different lenses.

<Insert PQ 2 about here>

While experience and testimony is valued in teaching, it isn't always easy to identify how to translate lived experience as a practitioner into academic writing. My original academic training was as a historian, and I was supervised by a historian, Professor Keith Middlemas. ~~Professor Middlemas, who~~ insisted on the value of reading political biographies to reach rounded conclusions on judgements made by politicians at particular moments. ~~Not~~ He did not advocate an uncritical reading; to read them uncritically: there is, after all, a vast range of evidence on the problems of personal memory as a historical source which raise issues not only of record, methodology, significance, and accuracy, but also of ideology and conscious or unconscious bias.

Is there a problem ~~about~~ with the presentation of practical political experience in academic literature? Is it unfair to suggest that academic journals do not find it easy to give space to practitioner testimony, except on an occasional basis? Of course, many practitioners would not want to do the structure-building of references to past authorities and academic debates to contextualize the experience on which they wish to reflect; they may feel that such work marginalizes and limits their professional expertise, ~~and~~. They may also feel that ~~this~~ their reflections are not as valued in an academic field as ~~they~~ are in the practitioner arena, at least without validation from other academics. Speaking personally, I found it encouraging when distinguished academics in specific fields urged deeper engagement with the lived experience of practitioners, seeking to understand our objectives, motivations and methods. ~~For~~ For example, in campaign communication (Scammell 2014) or source strategies within the media or policy-making arenas (Schlesinger 1990). ~~But~~ Sometimes, however, it can feel as though your only value in the context of academic publishing is as a case study, ~~and~~ that your experience is useful only for testing theories. It may be that the time is right ~~for~~ reflecting to reflect on how experience and testimony is recorded and used in academic



journals and conferences. Insider accounts, participant observation, and what is now called autoethnography may all supply opportunities for greater understanding.

**Commented [LS5]:** AU: Is this correct? If not, please clarify the opportunities presented in some other way.

**Commented [LA6R5]:** Yes, it is.

The final area which seems to me in need of further attention by political science is the societal governance of technology. It is arguable that there has been something of a lacuna within the field of political science ~~—(and indeed, public administration—see (Pollitt 2010)—~~in relation to the governance of media and technology policy. It is evident that the power of new technologies ~~is raising~~raises questions that challenge the ability of governments to address new, complex issues. Recent developments in relation to fake news, advertising and data usage have brought the governance of the ~~“big tech”~~ companies ~~—internet intermediaries such as Facebook and Google—~~into sharp focus, with threats of further regulation in the UK and Europe. The effectiveness of public administration in practice has come under challenge from the practices of companies such as Uber and Volkswagen, whose practiceswhich have generated questions relating to algorithmic governance and regulation. These issues are ~~being~~ increasingly addressed by scholars, including those within political science. My Cardiff colleague Madeline Carr examines technological governance from an international relations perspective in her book on the making of US internet policy as a measurement of US power. She argues persuasively for the assertion of agency in the governance of technological change ~~—~~.

**Commented [LS7]:** AU: Are Uber and Volkswagen issuing these challenges, or do the behaviour of these companies challenge the effectiveness public administration? If the former, please ignore my edit; if the latter, please either accept or clarify some other way.

**Commented [LA8R7]:** Edit accepted!

My own academic background is a melange of what might be called ~~“genre blurring”~~ (Rhodes 2014), drawing on history, media and cultural studies, as ~~much well~~ as practical experience of politics, government, and public administration. In thinking about government, I have great sympathy for the desire of Bevir and Rhodes to stress its ~~“cultural practice”~~ by seeing ~~“the world through the eyes of the manager, top civil servant and politician”~~ (Bever and Rhodes 2008)—even though comparing several stories can divulge a set of contradictory



responses. But then, as Barack Obama said in one of his last public contributions as U.S. President, “democracy is messy” (Etherington 2016), so why should our governance stories not reflect that? <end slug>

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<PQ 2> As a result, I have been telling “~~“~~governance stories~~”~~”<sup>2</sup> (Bevir and Rhodes 2006) in a variety of departments: ~~I~~~~n~~ the business school, not only in relation to the development of courses in public administration, but more widely, in terms of business relationships to government and politics; in social sciences, particularly in providing a practitioner perspective on debates in education; and in political science, where the view from a minister’s office is seen as providing ~~a~~ unique insight, ~~with and~~ the potential to help analyse policy and delivery issues through a number of different lenses.

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<sup>1</sup> The Welsh Government, established following the creation of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999 after a referendum vote in 1997, is the executive body that delivers devolved policy in Wales. It is made up of ministers—themselves elected politicians—appointed by the first minister, the leader of the largest party. The body is accountable to the National Assembly.

<sup>2</sup> ~~2 The Welsh Government, established following the creation of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999 after a referendum vote in 1997, is the executive body delivering that delivers devolved policy in Wales, following the creation of the National Assembly for Wales in 1999 after a referendum vote in 1997. It is made up of Ministers— (themselves elected~~

~~politicians—) appointed by the First Minister, the leader of the largest party;: they The body  
isare accountable to the National Assembly.~~

<sup>3</sup> He reminded an audience at Cardiff Business School earlier this year that the term was originally coined by officials in the UK Treasury as a pejorative term! ▲

<sup>4</sup> The memoirs of the former ~~First-first Minister-minister~~ of Wales, the late Rhodri Morgan, were subsequently published in September 2017.

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